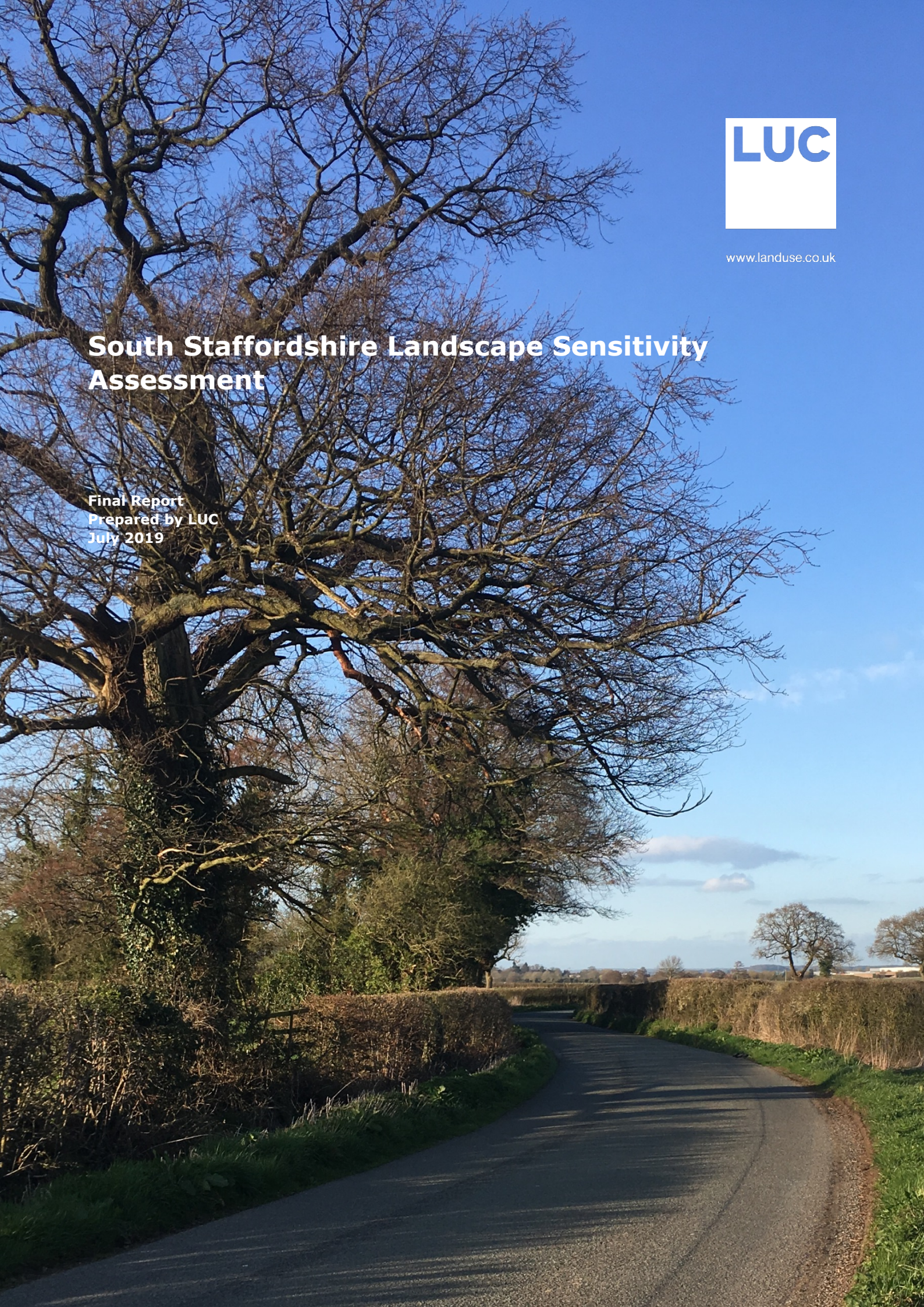




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South Staffordshire Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

**Final Report
Prepared by LUC
July 2019**



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Front cover: School Lane, Dunston

Introduction, Policy Context and Methodology: Himley Hall

Summary of Findings: Settlement edge of Sedgley

Appendix 1: Gailey

Appendix 2: Looking south from Trysull

Appendix 3: Edge of Codsall

Appendix 4: Croft Lane, Gailey



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A: Introduction, Policy Context & Methodology



1 Introduction

- 1.1 LUC was commissioned by Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall, Metropolitan Borough Councils and City of Wolverhampton Council (together comprising the Black Country) and South Staffordshire District Council in September 2018 to undertake a landscape sensitivity assessment of areas of Green Belt land within the Black Country and South Staffordshire. The Landscape Sensitivity Assessment was undertaken alongside, but discrete from the LUC Green Belt Study for Sandwell, Dudley, Walsall, Wolverhampton and South Staffordshire¹.
- 1.2 This report sets out the findings of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for South Staffordshire only. A separate report has been prepared setting out the findings for the Black Country.
- 1.3 The assessment of landscape sensitivity to housing and commercial development uses a criteria-based process to ensure consistent and transparent analysis of sensitivity, drawing on spatial analysis and field based surveys. Detailed information on the methodology used in the study can be found in **Chapter 3**.

Purpose of this study

- 1.4 The purpose of this study is to provide an assessment of the extent to which the character and quality of the landscape abutting the West Midlands conurbation within the Black Country and South Staffordshire and also around settlements in South Staffordshire is, in principle, susceptible to change as a result of introducing built development.
- 1.5 The study forms an important piece of evidence for the preparation of the Black Country Plan and the South Staffordshire Local Plan.
- 1.6 The study concentrates on understanding the sensitivities to development and does not address potential landscape capacity in terms of the quantity of built development, as this is a further stage of assessment that is dependent on a much wider range of considerations other than landscape and visual effects (such as highways impact, ecological effects, archaeological constraints and other environmental and sustainability factors) and consideration of cumulative development, landscape objectives and thresholds of acceptable change.
- 1.7 The study highlights likely landscape and visual sensitivities within each assessment area and provides a broad landscape character based assessment rather than a site level assessment as might be required for a planning application.

Assessment Scope

- 1.8 This study considers the landscape sensitivity of specific areas of Green Belt land identified for more focused assessment in Stage 2 of the LUC *Green Belt Study* within the Black Country and South Staffordshire. This includes:
 - all Green Belt land within the four Black Country boroughs;
 - land within South Staffordshire adjacent to the defined settlements of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton, encompassing both locations identified through South Staffordshire Council's 'call for sites' exercises and adjacent land without promoted sites;

¹ LUC, *Black Country Green Belt Study & South Staffordshire Green Belt Study* (2019; separate reports)

- land immediately adjacent to selected South Staffordshire settlements (Tier 1-4 settlements from the 2018 Rural Service and Facilities Audit), again encompassing locations identified through South Staffordshire Council's 'call for sites' exercises and adjacent land without promoted sites;
 - locations away from existing settlement edges that have been identified by South Staffordshire Council as potential sites for new settlements, sustainable urban extensions and employment development.
- 1.9 Landscape areas that lie adjacent to any of the defined settlements outlined above have been reduced in outward extend to the first significant boundary feature, or beyond that to incorporate land identified in South Staffordshire's 'call for sites' exercise.
- 1.10 The overall study area for both the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment and the Stage 2 Green Belt Assessment are therefore the same, other than the inclusion within the former of several areas within South Staffordshire just outside the Green Belt – within designated open countryside - that relate to settlements which border the Green Belt. These additional areas have been identified by South Staffordshire Council.
- 1.11 The 'call for sites' provided in this report are for information only, and may not be comprehensive as new sites may emerge following publication. It should be noted that there are some cross-boundary 'call for sites' which may have been submitted through Black Country and / or South Staffordshire 'call for sites' exercise. A comprehensive and up-to-date map and list of 'call for sites' can be found at: <https://blackcountrycorestrategy.dudley.gov.uk/t5/> and <https://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/planning/shlaa-5-year-supply.cfm>.

Duty to Co-operate Engagement

- 1.12 A method statement setting out the proposed assessment approach for the Black Country and South Staffordshire Landscape Sensitivity Assessment was circulated to the Councils' key stakeholders with whom the Councils' have a duty to cooperate, as well as other organisations the Councils considered necessary. This included the following:
- Birmingham City Council.
 - Bromsgrove District Council.
 - Cannock Chase District Council.
 - Coventry City Council.
 - Environment Agency.
 - Historic England.
 - Lichfield District Council.
 - Natural England.
 - North Warwickshire Borough Council
 - Redditch Borough Council
 - Shropshire Council.
 - South Staffordshire District Council.
 - Stafford Borough Council.
 - Staffordshire County Council.
 - Stratford-on-Avon District Council.
 - Tamworth Borough Council.
 - Telford & Wrekin Council.

- Wildlife Trust.
- Wyre Forest District Council.

1.13 Stakeholders were invited to comment on the draft methodology and a summary of their responses and how their comments have been addressed is provided in **Appendix 4**.

Structure of this Report

1.14 This report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2** provides the policy context to the study;
- **Chapter 3** presents the methodology; and
- **Chapter 4** provides a summary of the results by authority, with detailed assessment outputs provided at **Appendix 1**.

2 Policy and Landscape Context

International

- 2.1 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) came into force in the UK in March 2007. It establishes the need to recognise landscape in law; to develop landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management and planning of landscapes; and to establish procedures for the participation of the general public and other stakeholders in the creation and implementation of landscape policies.
- 2.2 The ELC definition of 'landscape' recognises that all landscape has value, be they ordinary, degraded or outstanding:
"Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors".
- 2.3 Signing up to the ELC means that the UK is committed to protect, manage and develop our landscapes as well as raise landscape awareness, involvement and enjoyment amongst local and visiting communities. Landscape character is defined by the ELC as *"a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse"*.

National

- 2.4 The Government published an updated and revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in July 2018, which was updated in February 2019, which sets out the environmental, social and economic planning policies for England. The February 2019 NPPF replaced the original version published in March 2012. Central to the NPPF policies is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, that development should be planned for positively and individual proposals should be approved wherever possible.
- 2.5 One of the overarching objectives that underpin the NPPF is set out in Paragraph 8: *"an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment."*
- 2.6 The NPPF supports the contents of the Neighbourhood Planning Act (2017) by making explicit reference to the need for local planning authorities to work with duty to cooperate partners on strategic priorities (paragraph 24) and defined strategic policies that make sufficient provision for climate change mitigation and adaptation and landscape and green infrastructure (paragraph 20).
- 2.7 The NPPF is explicit in its requirement for development plan policies to protect and where appropriate, enhance the landscape. Paragraph 170 states that *"planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes"* and *"recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside"*.
- 2.8 At paragraph 127(c) it states that *"Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments ... are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding environment and landscape setting"*.

Local

South Staffordshire Core Strategy

- 2.9 Adopted in 2012, the South Staffordshire Core Strategy sets out the overall planning strategy for the District until 2026 and explains how the Council will deliver the spatial aspects of their vision for South Staffordshire, as well as how regional and national policies will be applied locally.

- 2.10 The South Staffordshire Core Strategy contains environmental policies including:

Core Policy 2: Protecting and Enhancing the Natural and Historic Environment

- 2.11 *The Council will support development or other initiatives where they protect, conserve and enhance the District's natural and heritage assets including ecological networks internationally, nationally and locally important designations. Particular support will be given to initiatives to improve the natural environment and increase the overall biodiversity of the District including the development of green infrastructure links and improvements to the historic environment where it is identified at risk.*

Development or initiatives will generally be supported when:

- a) there is no detrimental impact to the significance of a natural or heritage asset;*
- b) they are not contrary to the control of development within internationally, nationally or locally designated areas including the Green Belt and Open South Staffordshire Local Plan Core Strategy DPD Adopted December 2012 67 Countryside, Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Motte Meadows Special Area of Conservation, and contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the character of the landscape and local distinctiveness;*
- c) they are consistent with the sustainable management of the asset including the repair and reuse of historic buildings;*
- d) they protect and improve water and air quality; and*
- e) they provide mitigation or compensatory measures to address any potential harmful implications and supporting enhancement measures.*

Development proposals should have regard to and support the actions and objectives of the Severn and Humber River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) and also have regard to the River Severn and River Trent Catchment Flood Management Plans (CFMPs).

Policy EQ1: Protecting, Enhancing and Expanding Natural Assets

- 2.12 *Permission will be granted for development which would not cause significant harm to sites and/or habitats of nature conservation, geological or geomorphological value, including ancient woodlands and hedgerows, together with species that are protected or under threat.*

Support will be given to proposals which enhance and increase the number of sites and habitats of nature conservation value, and to meeting the objectives of the Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan (SBAP). In line with the objectives of the Water Framework Directive (WFD), development proposals must not adversely affect the ecological status of a water body and wherever possible take measures to improve ecological value in order to help meet the required status.

The restoration or creation of new habitats and the expansion of habitats in South Staffordshire will be supported where these contribute to priorities in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and the Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan including priority habitats such as native woodland, hedgerows, and lowland heathland. Wherever possible, development proposals should build in biodiversity by incorporating ecologically sensitive design and features for biodiversity within the development scheme. Special mention is made of The Beacons shown on the Environment Key Diagram and other largely undeveloped high prominences including views to and from these locations.

Policy EQ3: Conservation, Preservation and Protection of Heritage Assets

- 2.13 *The conservation and enhancement of South Staffordshire's historic environment will be achieved by a number of means:*

- a) The Council will establish, review and maintain records of known heritage assets including:*

- *Listed buildings*
- *Scheduled Ancient Monuments*
- *Conservation Areas*
- *Registered Parks and Gardens*
- *Buildings of Special Local Interest (a 'local list')*
- *Undesignated heritage assets*
- *Other historic landscapes,*

and will support and encourage ever greater appreciation, knowledge and enjoyment of the District's historic environment and heritage assets.

- b) The Council will support and encourage measures which secure the improved maintenance, management and sustainable reuse of heritage assets, particularly those which are identified nationally or locally as being at risk.*
- c) The Council will ensure that development which affects a heritage asset or its setting will be informed by a proportionate assessment of the significance of the asset, including its setting, which is likely to be affected by the proposals.*
- d) In the case of development in a conservation area, proposals will be considered against any management plan and appraisal adopted for that area.*
- e) The Council will consider the significance and setting of all proposed works to heritage assets, adhering to the following;*
 - minimising the loss and disturbance of historic materials*
 - using appropriate materials, and*
 - ensuring alterations are reversible*

Policy EQ4: Protecting and Enhancing the Character and Appearance of the Landscape

- 2.14 The intrinsic rural character and local distinctiveness of the South Staffordshire landscape should be maintained and where possible enhanced. Trees, veteran trees, woodland, ancient woodland and hedgerows should be protected from damage and retained. For visual and ecological reasons, new and replacement planting should be of locally native species.*

The Council will encourage and support the creation of new woodlands and the management of existing woodlands particularly where they contribute to community forestry. Throughout the District, the design and location of new development should take account of the characteristics and sensitivity of the landscape and its surroundings, and not have a detrimental effect on the immediate environment and on any important medium and long distance views. The siting, scale, and design of new development will need to take full account of the nature and distinctive qualities of the local landscape.

Where possible, opportunities should be taken to add character and distinctiveness through the contribution of new landscape features, particularly to landscapes which have been degraded. Development within the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and its setting as shown on the Policies Map will be subject to special scrutiny, in accordance with national policy and any additional guidance, in order to conserve and enhance the landscape, nature conservation and recreation interests of the area.

Landscape Context and Guidance

- 2.15** Landscape Character Assessments produced at national and local levels, as well as other studies, assessments and background documents that are of relevance to the understanding of landscape character in the Black Country and South Staffordshire were used for contextual understanding of the sensitivity of the landscape. These include:

- National Character Area assessments for the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau; Arden; Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain; and Cannock Chase and Cank Wood;
- The Planning for Landscape Change SPG (2000). (The Landscape Character Assessment produced for Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Structure Plan 2010-26, which was subsequently revoked but is still a material consideration);
- The Black Country – An Historic Landscape Characterisation – English Heritage (2009);
- The Staffordshire County Council Historic Environment Character Assessment (2011).
- The Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2014-19 (Green Belt on the eastern edge of South Staffordshire falls within the AONB, so potential impact of development on the defined 'special qualities' of the designated area will be a consideration);
- The Staffordshire County Council Draft Staffordshire Landscape Character Assessment Review (2015) (not adopted);
- The Staffordshire County Council Historic Landscape Characterisation Mapping (2016);
- The Borough-Wide Urban Historic Landscape Characterisation Study for Dudley MBC (2016);
- The South Staffordshire Landscape Sensitivity Study Update (2017);
- Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area Strategic Growth Study (2018) (includes high level analysis of landscape character, topography, land use and drainage patterns); and
- The Black Country-wide Historic Landscape Characterisation Study (currently in production).

3 Methodology

- 3.1 This section sets out the methodology for the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, undertaken alongside but discrete from the Green Belt Assessment for Sandwell, Dudley, Walsall, Wolverhampton (the Black Country) and South Staffordshire. This includes information on the study area and spatial framework, the key sources of evidence used, the assessment criteria and the process followed.

The approach to assessing landscape sensitivity

- 3.2 There is currently no prescribed method for evaluating the sensitivity of landscape to development. However, the approach taken in this study builds on *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity* (Scottish Heritage and the former Countryside Agency, 2004) as well as LUC's considerable experience from previous and on-going studies of a similar nature.
- 3.3 Paragraph 4.2 of Topic Paper 6 states that:
- "Judging landscape character sensitivity requires professional judgement about the degree to which the landscape in question is robust, in that it is able to accommodate change without adverse impacts on character. This involves making decisions about whether or not significant characteristic elements of the landscape will be liable to loss... and whether important aesthetic aspects of character will be liable to change."*
- 3.4 In this study the following definition of sensitivity has been used, which is based on the principles set out in Topic Paper 6. It is also compliant with the third edition of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA 3, 2013) as well as definitions used in other landscape sensitivity studies of this type²:

Landscape sensitivity is the relative extent to which the character and quality of an area (including its visual attributes) is likely to change as a result of introducing a particular type of development.

- 3.5 This Landscape Sensitivity Assessment is a strategic-level study which considers the landscape and visual sensitivity of each area to the *principle* of built development, without knowing the specific size or exact location of development (as this would be detailed at the planning application level). It was undertaken at a scale of 1:25,000 and does not consider specific development proposals where these might exist (although the location of sites identified by the Councils through their 'call for sites' exercises are overlaid on the relevant maps for information). A more detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) will be required on a site by site basis in relation to proposals for the development of any specific sites and/ or to inform masterplanning.

Study Area

- 3.6 This assessment considers areas of Green Belt land identified for Stage 2 of the Green Belt Study as set out above and illustrated in **Figure 3.1**. The overall study area for both the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment and the Stage 2 Green Belt Assessment are therefore the same, other than the inclusion within the former of additional areas outside the Green Belt.

² This definition does not imply any judgement about the type of change that may result from development – it could be positive or negative,

- 3.7 Areas of non-Green Belt Land identified by South Staffordshire Council to be included within the study include:
- Land outside the Green Belt but located immediately adjacent to selected South Staffordshire settlements (Tier 1-4 settlements from the 2018 Rural Service and Facilities Audit);
 - Land outside the Green Belt in locations away from existing settlement edges that have been identified by South Staffordshire Council as potential sites for new settlements, sustainable urban extensions to Stafford and employment development.
- 3.8 Some areas were automatically scoped out of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment due to:
- The presence of known planning constraints (as detailed in the LUC Black Country Green Belt Study methodology³) where development would not be permitted. These 'absolute constraints' were identified as:
 - Cultural Heritage:
 - Scheduled Monuments (SMs).
 - Registered Parks and Gardens (RPGs).
 - Natural Heritage:
 - Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).
 - Local Nature Reserves (LNRs).
 - Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) / Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs).
 - Ancient Woodland.
 - Other Constraints:
 - Common Land.
 - Flood Zone 3 Areas.
 - Burial Grounds.
 - The presence of existing development and a consequent lack of any open areas that preclude a 'landscape' assessment.
- 3.9 The key constraints which determined the scoping are also shown on figures in Section 4 below. Large areas of constrained land were excluded from assessment areas. However, the shape and complexity of areas of constraint and unconstrained areas have in some instances meant it was not feasible to exclude small or narrow areas of land subject to these constraints. This process resulted in geographically distinct landscape sensitivity assessment areas being identified. These areas, following the removal of land via the scoping out process are illustrated in **Figure 3.2 and 3.3**.

Definition of Landscape Assessment Areas

- 3.10 This assessment is based on a combination of desktop study and field survey.
- 3.11 The principal source of written information for carrying out the sensitivity assessment in South Staffordshire is the Planning for Landscape Change SPG (a landscape character assessment produced for Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Structure Plan 2010-26 in 2000), which was subsequently revoked but is still a material consideration. This was updated in 2015 as the Draft Staffordshire Landscape Character Assessment Review but not adopted and is not publically available. Within the Black Country, published landscape character assessments are not available other than at the national level (as detailed in Chapter 2).

³ LUC, *Black Country Green Belt Study & South Staffordshire Green Belt Study* (2019)

- 3.12 The overall study area has been subdivided into landscape assessment areas, with the aim of identifying areas with similar characteristics which are therefore likely to be broadly consistent in terms of their sensitivity. These areas have been selected to avoid variation and complexities across each landscape area.
- 3.13 Within South Staffordshire, landscape areas were 'nested' within the framework of the Draft Staffordshire Landscape Character Assessment Review (Staffordshire County Council, 2015), so that areas of consistent landscape character are kept within the same unit. However, in some cases it was appropriate to make a finer grain landscape classification, further refining landscape assessment areas into smaller areas, where variations in local landscape character existed and drawing these to physical boundary features.
- 3.14 Within the Black Country, where published landscape character assessments are not available other than at the national level, landscape assessment areas were defined using available data on variations in local landscape character including changes in underlying geology, topography, landscape pattern and land use. Boundaries were drawn to existing features in the landscape i.e. tracing physical features such as field boundaries, roads/railways, watercourses, woodland edges etc. This information was supplemented from mapping, aerial views and other digital and published sources (as listed above Para 2.15).
- 3.15 Landscape areas are defined on a broad character-based framework and not a detailed field by field assessment. A guideline minimum size for landscape assessment areas was set at 20 hectares. This work is not a substitute for detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) at the allocations/ application stage, although it can provide an important baseline for more detailed analysis.
- 3.16 Fieldwork to build on the initial desktop analysis is an essential element of the study. All identified landscape areas were visited, assessed and photographed, and boundaries amended as necessary to reflect findings. The landscape areas were reviewed following site survey and assessment. It is important to note that field survey was undertaken from rights of way and publicly accessible vantage points.

Criteria for Assessment of Landscape Sensitivity

- 3.17 In line with good practice landscape and visual sensitivity is assessed for each landscape area with reference to defined criteria, which are set out in **Table 3.1**, along with examples to illustrate the different levels of sensitivity so that judgements can be clearly traced back to the underlying landscape baseline.
- 3.18 Criteria selection is based on the attributes of the landscape most likely to be affected by development and considered both 'landscape' and 'visual' aspects of sensitivity. The criterion are:
- Scale (the scale of the landscape);
 - Landform (the topographical complexity of the landscape);
 - Landscape pattern and time depth (the complexity of landscape pattern and the extent to which the landscape has 'time depth' – a sense of being a historic landscape);
 - Natural character (the presence of natural or semi-natural features that are important to landscape character);
 - Built character (the extent that built character contributes to landscape character);
 - Recreational value (the value of the area for recreation in which experience of the landscape is important);
 - Perceptual aspects (qualities such as rurality, traditional land uses with few modern, human influences, sense of remoteness or tranquillity);
 - Settlement setting (the extent to which the area relates or contributes to the form and pattern of existing adjacent settlement, and the character of the adjacent settlement edge);

- Visual prominence (visual prominence of the area and the character of skylines); and
- Inter-visibility (the degree of inter-visibility with surrounding designated landscapes and the role the area plays in contributing to valued views).

Table 3.1 Criteria to determine landscape sensitivity

The individual criteria are set out in the table below. Note that the overall rating is based on professional judgement and in some cases one criterion alone may be sufficient to result in a judgement of high sensitivity but more often it is the interaction of factors.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Criteria		
Scale <i>This considers the scale within the landscape area. Intricate smaller scale landscapes are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of built development than uniform large scale landscapes because of the risk of development appearing out of scale with the underlying landscape pattern. Field boundaries that are intact (with strong hedgerows and mature trees) increase the sense of intimacy, whereas boundaries that are lost or degraded increase the perceived scale of the landscape.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
Large scale field pattern or land divisions (generally over 20 ha).	Medium scale field pattern or land divisions or a mixture of small scale and large scale fields or land divisions.	Small scale field pattern or land divisions (generally under 5 ha).
Landform <i>This considers the shape of the landscape. Smooth, gently undulating or flat landforms are likely to be less sensitive to development than a landscape with a dramatic landform, distinct landform features as development may mask distinctive topographical features that contribute to landscape character.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
Absence of strong topographical variety. Featureless, smooth, very gently undulating or flat landform.	Undulating landform or some distinct landform features.	Presence of strong topographical variety or distinctive landform features e.g. incised valley with prominent slopes.
Landscape pattern and time depths <i>This considers the historic origin of the landscape area including field pattern. Landscapes with more irregular field patterns, particularly those of historic origin, are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than landscape with regular scale field patterns because of the risk of losing characteristic landscape patterns.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
Simple. Regular or uniform field patterns (mainly of modern origin).	Mixture of simple and complex landscape field patterns.	Complex. Irregular and varied field patterns (including historic field patterns i.e. piecemeal enclosure with irregular boundaries, ridge and furrow). Landscapes designated for their historic value.

'Natural' character <i>This considers the 'naturalistic' qualities of the landscape area in terms of the coverage of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features (e.g. trees and hedgerows) which contribute to landscape character and could be vulnerable to loss from development. Areas with frequent natural features (including large areas of designated habitats) result in increased sensitivity to development, while landscape with limited natural features will be less sensitive.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
Lack of semi-natural habitat coverage or valued natural features. e.g. intensively farmed or areas with high levels of existing development or brownfield sites.	Areas of valued semi-natural habitats and features in parts of the landscape, whilst other parts are intensively farmed or developed.	Frequent occurrence of valued natural features (tree, hedgerows, woodland) or areas of semi-natural habitats.
Built character <i>This considers the built character of the landscape area with particular reference to the presence of heritage assets that contribute to landscape character (i.e. valued features that may be designated as Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings, archaeological features or remains or other features). Landscapes with a high density of historic features important to the character of the area is likely to more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than areas where such development already exists.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
Presence or adjacent to modern development or contemporary structures that detract from landscape character, e.g. utility, infrastructure or industrial elements.	Mixture of modern development and historic features important to landscape character.	Presence or adjacent to small scale, historic or vernacular settlement or historic features important to landscape character (e.g. Listed Buildings, archaeological features).
Recreational character <i>This criterion considers the presence of features and facilities which enable enjoyment of the landscape, and the importance of these. This may include public rights of way, bridleway, open access land and outdoor tourist/ visitor attractions with facilities. Recreation activities such as walking, cycling, horse riding or more formal recreation activities where enjoyment of the landscape is important to the experience. Importance of features may be indicated by designation as long distance footpaths or recreation routes, national cycle routes, proximity to areas of local population (such as local parks) and outdoor tourist attractions often marked on Ordinance Survey maps.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
Publically inaccessible or limited provision of access routes likely to be of community importance. Recreational value limited to community sports facilities (where enjoyment of the landscape is not integral to the activity).	Some Public Rights of Way and footpaths. Landscapes with green spaces or recreation areas valued in the local context.	Landscapes important for access and enjoyment of the landscape e.g. open access land, country parks or outdoor tourist attractions with visitor facilities. Presence of well-connected long distance routes and public rights of way linking centres of population.
Perceptual aspects <i>This considers qualities such as rurality (traditional land uses with few modern, human influences), sense of remoteness or tranquillity. High scenic value, freedom from human activity/ disturbance and 'dark skies' would add to sensitivity in this criterion. This is because development will introduce new and uncharacteristic features which may detract from a sense of tranquillity and or remoteness.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
Close to visible or audible signs of human activity and modern development.	Some sense of rural character but with some signs of human activity and modern development.	A rural landscape, remote from visible or audible signs of human activity and modern development.

Settlement setting

The extent to which the landscape area contributes to the identity and distinctiveness of a settlement by way of its character and/ or scenic quality, for example by providing an attractive backdrop, or playing an important part in views from a settlement.

The extent to which the landscape area relates to the form and pattern of the existing adjacent settlement and the character of the adjacent settlement edge, for example if it is well integrated by woodland cover or open and exposed to form a 'hard' edge. This includes the role of significant landscape elements in either separating an undeveloped area from a settled area or linking it to it. The criterion also considers the extent to which the area contributes to a perceived gap between settlements⁴ (the loss of which would increase coalescence).

Low	Moderate	High
Does not provide an attractive backdrop to adjacent settlement or play a separation role. Development could provide the opportunity to improve an existing settlement edge.	Provides some contribution as a backdrop to the adjacent settlement or plays a role in the perception of a gap between settlements. Development would not represent a step-change in settlement form but may adversely affect the existing settlement edge to some extent.	Contributes positively as an attractive backdrop to adjacent settlement, providing a distinctive element in views that are key to the character of the settlement or forms an important part in the perception of a gap between settlements. Development would adversely affect settlement edge (which may be historic or distinctive) or would have a poor relationship with it (crossing a boundary feature or extending into an area with a distinctly different landscape).

Visual prominence

This considers the visual prominence of the landscape area, reflecting the extent of openness or enclosure in the landscape (due to landform and land cover), and extent to which potential development would be visible. It also considers the skyline character of the area including whether it forms a visually distinctive skyline (e.g. due to the presence of important landmark features) or an important undeveloped skyline.

Low	Moderate	High
Non-prominent. Visually enclosed landscape screened by landform or land cover. Does not form a visually distinctive skyline, e.g. natural bowls.	A mixture of prominent and non-prominent. Semi-enclosed or has some enclosed and some open areas or visually distinctive skylines.	Visually prominent. Very open in views from the wider landscape. e.g. open plains/ plateau with no screening land cover. Forms a visually distinctive skyline, e.g. undeveloped skylines or skylines with important landmarks (might include historic monuments or features).

Inter-visibility with adjacent designated landscapes or promoted viewpoints

This considers the role the landscape area plays in contributing to valued views. These are considered to be views within, towards or from Cannock Chase AONB, Registered Parks and Gardens, and all marked and promoted viewpoints.

Low	Moderate	High
Little inter-visibility with adjacent sensitive landscapes (i.e. Cannock Chase AONB or Registered Parks and Gardens) or marked viewpoints (i.e. viewpoints marked on the OS 1:25,000).	Some inter-visibility with surrounding sensitive landscapes or viewpoints.	Strong inter-visibility with sensitive landscapes (i.e. Cannock Chase AONB or Registered Parks and Gardens) or marked viewpoints (i.e. viewpoints marked on the OS 1:25,000).

⁴ The settlement hierarchy of South Staffordshire is set out in **Appendix 2**.

- 3.19 Landscapes designated both nationally and locally for their historic value, including Historic Landscape Areas and Registered Parks and Gardens are considered under the 'Landscape Pattern and Time Depth' criteria. The presence of built heritage assets that contribute to landscape character are considered under 'Built Heritage' criteria. However, it is worth noting that although the assessment considers the historic character of the landscape, it does not consider specific cultural heritage/archaeological issues associated with individual designated heritage assets and their setting.
- 3.20 Three small areas in South Staffordshire lie within the Cannock Chase AONB. The sensitivity of these areas is considered in the concluding 'Landscape Sensitivity Judgement' with specific reference to the special qualities of the AONB and the value of the protected status of this landscape reflected in the overall judgement.

Sensitivity Judgements

- 3.21 Text is provided for each of the ten sensitivity criteria, reflecting the qualities of the landscape area and the extent to which development could affect these. A three-point rating from 'low' to 'high' landscape sensitivity is used to illustrate levels of landscape sensitivity for each individual criteria – i.e. how sensitive the character and quality of the landscape would be to change.
- 3.22 In assessing landscape and visual sensitivity, reference is made to any designations or constraints which influence judgements. Some of the constraints shown may not directly affect landscape character or sensitivity, but often the areas concerned may also have landscape sensitivities associated with landscape elements – for example the habitats in designated wildlife sites are often also valued in landscape terms.
- 3.23 The judgement on the **overall** landscape sensitivity of the area is based on consideration of the range of sensitivities identified and the weight attached to any particular criteria in the area in question. An overall rating is given on a five point scale. Guideline definitions of sensitivity levels are given in the table below:

Table 3.2 Overall Landscape Sensitivity

Sensitivity	Definition
High	The landscape has strong character and qualities with notable features which are highly sensitive to change as a result of introducing built development
Moderate-high	
Moderate	The landscape has some distinctive characteristics and valued qualities, with some sensitivity to change as a result of introducing built development.
Low-moderate	
Low	The landscape lacks distinct character and qualities and has few notable features, or is robust with regard to introducing built development.

- 3.24 Landscape sensitivity is the result of a complex interplay of often unequally weighted variable (or criteria). The overall assessment of landscape sensitivity are based on professional judgement, taking account of the interplay between criteria, as well as those which might be more important to the landscape character of any particular assessment area. An area rated as having *high* sensitivity may do so because it has a relatively high sensitivity to a number of different criteria but it may also do so because of a particularly high sensitivity to just one criterion.
- 3.25 The process for defining landscape areas aims to minimise the extent to which significant differences in sensitivity are likely to occur within one area, but in some cases a gradual change in sensitivity can be identified – for example a gradual increase in sensitivity with distance from an existing settlement edge. Limitations in terms of the resolution of the assessment may also mean that different parts of a landscape area are considered to have different levels of sensitivity.
- 3.26 For the smaller landscape areas where there is a gradual change in sensitivity the maps show the highest sensitivity rating and the text will need to be interrogated to show any variations across the landscape area. These would need to be tested further on site in light of the sensitivities identified in the assessment. Significant variations to the overall rating are noted as anomalies. For larger landscape areas, attributes of higher or lower sensitivity than the overall rating are mapped in order to distinguish area of different sensitivity.
- 3.27 Whilst landscape sensitivity assessment results provide an initial indication of landscape sensitivity, it should not be interpreted as a definitive statement on the suitability of individual sites for a particular development or land use change. It is not a replacement for detailed studies for specific siting and design and all proposals will need to be assessed on their own individual merits.

Development types

- 3.28 The relative landscape sensitivities of each landscape area is assessed with respect to the *principle* of any development without knowing the location, layout, density, form, quantity or mitigation proposed of any development which may be constructed.
- 3.29 The assessment addresses the following types of development. These scenarios were agreed with SSDC as representative of development types that may come forward within South Staffordshire:
- Residential dwellings are assumed to be 2-3 storeys – with associated access roads, private gardens and garaging; and/or
 - Commercial industrial units, hotels, warehouses or office blocks - with large expanses of cladding or glass, access roads, large car parks and associated landscaping.
- 3.30 Development of higher height or bulk will generally have a greater impact on the landscape than smaller scale development, and as a result landscape areas are generally considered to have a higher sensitivity to future change from employment development than 2-3 storey residential development. However, for the purposes of this study, only those landscape areas which contain promoted sites brought forward for employment uses have been specifically assessed for this particular type of development.

Assessment Process and Format of Outputs

Stage 1: Desk-based assessment

- 3.31 All relevant documents and available GIS data were compiled and reviewed to form the starting point and overall context for the study.
- 3.32 The desktop assessment was informed by mapping, aerial views and other online resources, including Landscape Character Assessments produced at national and local levels, as well as other studies, assessments and background documents (as listed in Chapter 2).
- 3.33 The analysis of sensitivity was informed by analysis of datasets that identify designations or other spatial classifications that might suggest landscape sensitivities – for example, conservation

areas, registered parks and gardens, tranquillity and dark skies, ancient woodland and Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitats. These are particularly useful for those areas where existing published landscape character assessment do not exist (other than at the national level).

Stage 2: Field Verification

- 3.34 A structured process of field survey verification was undertaken by landscape experts in order to test and refine the outputs from the desk study. Each assessment area was visited in turn to record information and take photographs. The field survey was undertaken from roads and public rights of way to gain an understanding of landscape sensitivity.
- 3.35 The landscape assessment fieldwork focused on the relationship between the assessment sites and the adjoining settlement, the landscape setting and wider views, the condition of individual landscape features and perceptual qualities.

Stage 3: Reporting

Appraisal of Landscape Sensitivity

- 3.36 The detailed assessment for each landscape area includes:
- A map (on OS 1:25,000 base) showing the boundaries of the landscape assessment area and illustrating a range of landscape and environmental information representing key constraints to development (i.e. areas within which the Council would not permit development as identified at Stage 2 of the LUC *Green Belt Study*, see para 3.8) which include heritage designations and nature conservation designations, as well as burial grounds, common land and Flood Zone 3 areas.
 - A map (on OS 1:25,000 base) showing the boundaries of the landscape assessment area including any promoted sites within it (as identified at Stage 2 of the Green Belt Study);
 - An aerial view of the assessment area including any sites promoted for development by landowners and/or developers⁵, with South Staffordshire promoted sites shown as dark blue, and Black Country promoted sites shown as light blue;
 - Illustrative photographs of the assessment area;
 - A brief description of the landscape area, making reference to its location and boundaries;
 - An appraisal of landscape and visual sensitivity against the criteria identified in the methodology.

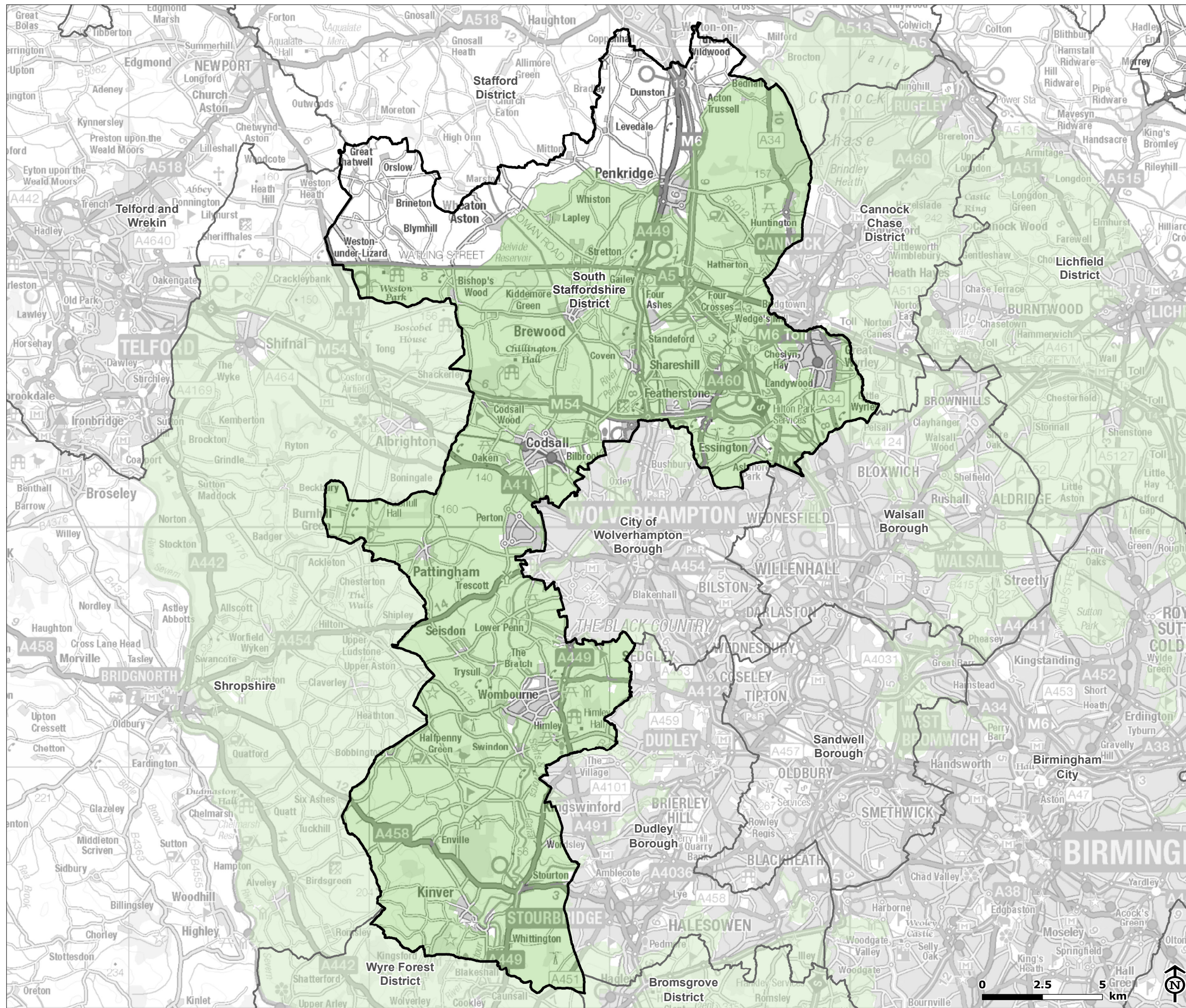
Evaluation of landscape assessment area

- 3.37 A summary justification for the evaluation of the areas' overall landscape sensitivity drawing from information from the individual criteria assessments. Separate ratings for any alternative development scenarios (as detailed in the Green Belt Assessment Stage 2) are noted.
- 3.38 A rating for the sensitivity of the landscape on a five point scale as set out in **Table 3.2** above.
- 3.39 Details of locations or attributes of higher or lower sensitivity than the overall rating, in each area, where appropriate are noted.
- 3.40 Sites promoted for development by landowners and/or developers within the landscape area are noted.
- 3.41 A map of the landscape assessment area illustrating the sensitivity rating across the area will be included, including any significant variations in sensitivity.
- 3.42 The individual assessments can be found at **Appendix 1**.

⁵ Sites promoted for development are colour coded as to whether they were received by South Staffordshire (dark blue) or Black Country (light blue) councils. This is most relevant for landscape areas on the edge of the Black Country/South Staffordshire border.




Summary of findings

- 3.43 Assessment results are summarised in a tabular form in **Chapter 4**, using colour-coding to highlight sensitivity ratings.
- 3.44 Maps are provided to visualise the results of the assessment of landscape sensitivity for South Staffordshire in **Chapter 4**. These are colour-coded to provide a simple overview of the spatial pattern of landscape and visual sensitivities to development across the relevant part of the District.



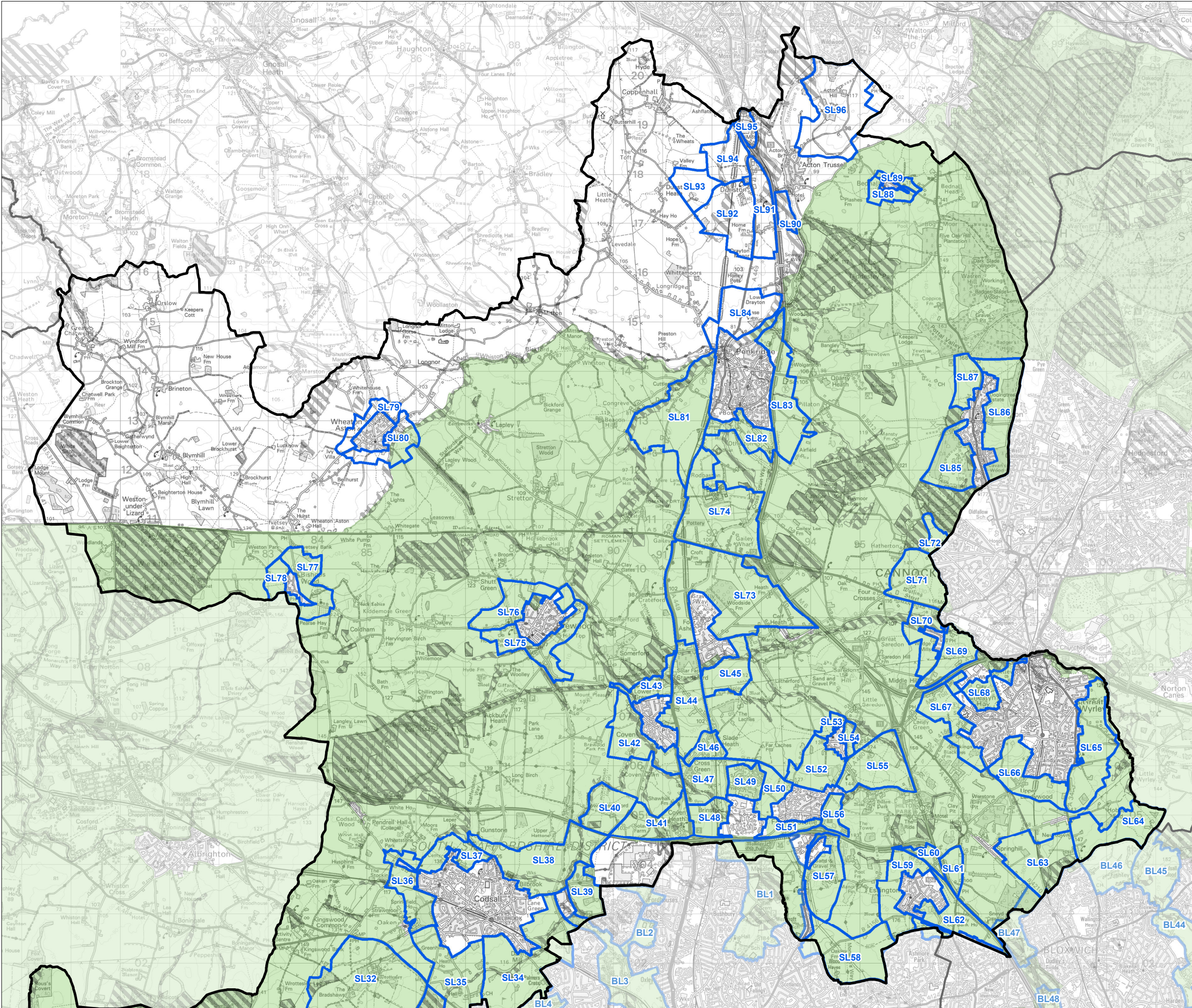
South Staffordshire Landscape Sensitivity

Figure 3.1: Overview of the Study Area

-  South Staffordshire Local Authority
-  Other Local Authority
-  Green Belt

LUC

Map Scale @A3: 1:155,000



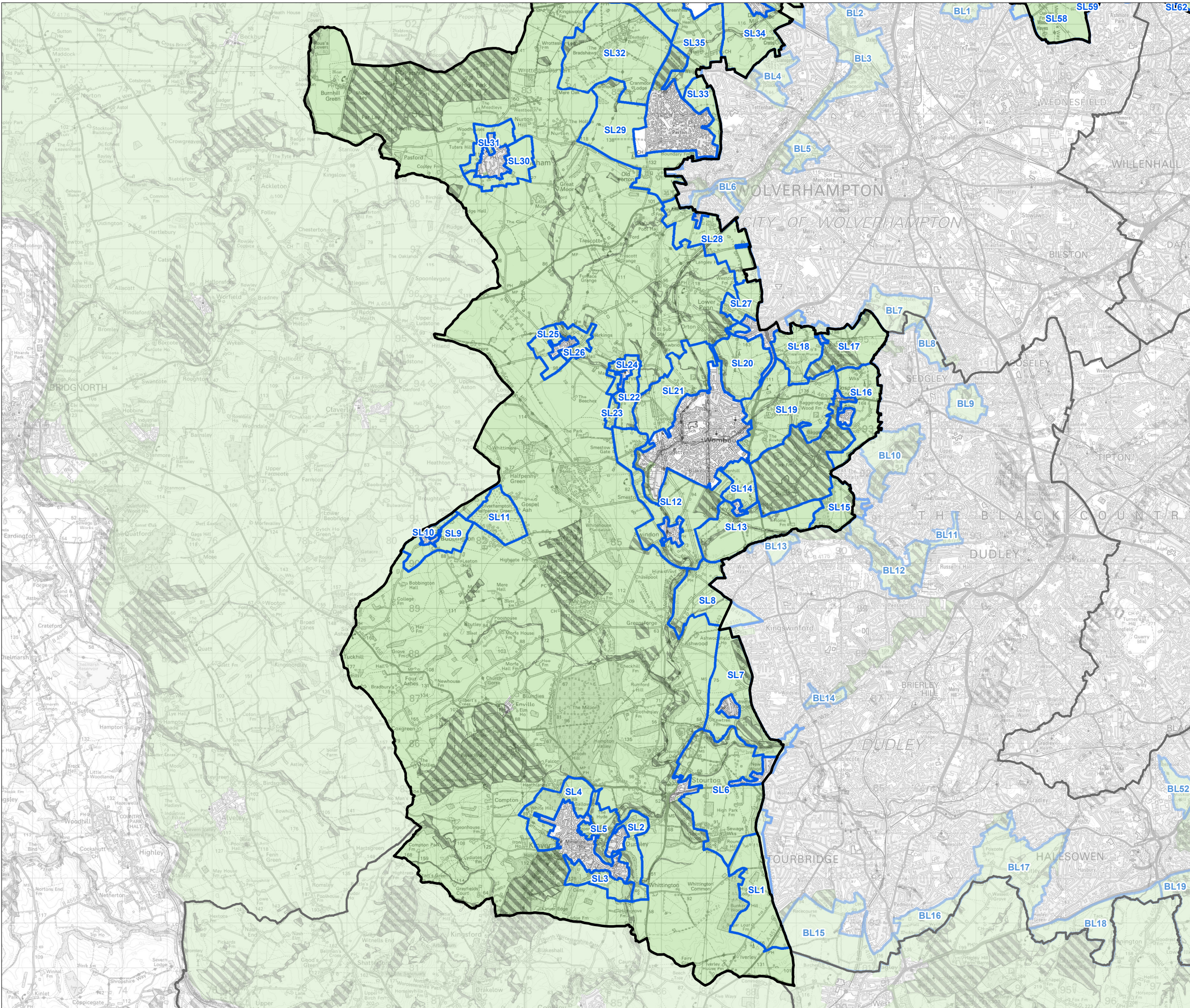
South Staffordshire Landscape Sensitivity

**Figure 3.2: Landscape Assessment
Areas - South Staffordshire North**

- South Staffordshire (North)
- Other Local Authority
- Green Belt
- Landscape area
- Landscape area in Black Country
- Absolute Constraint

0 2 km





South Staffordshire Landscape Sensitivity

**Figure 3.3: Landscape Assessment
Areas - South Staffordshire South**

- South Staffordshire (South)
- Other Local Authority
- Green Belt
- Landscape area
- Landscape area in Black Country
- Absolute Constraint

0 2.5 km



B: Summary of Findings



4 Summary of Findings

- 4.1 The findings for each landscape area within South Staffordshire are presented in this chapter (including those that extend into neighbouring authorities within the Black Country). The table and figures summarise the sensitivity ratings in table and map format (**Table 4.1** and **Figures 4.2 and 4.4**). Note that the assessment for each of the landscape areas should be read in conjunction with these overall findings. In some cases more than one sensitivity rating is provided to indicate where there is spatial variation in sensitivity across an assessment area and where these variations are significant they are shown on the mapping provided, however the text should also be interrogated to identify any areas of higher and lower sensitivity.
- 4.2 Areas within South Staffordshire located alongside the West Midlands conurbation (Dudley, Wolverhampton and Walsall) often have a lower sensitivity to development than the rural villages within the district, due to the urbanising influences of the adjacent conurbation. Generally the visual influence of adjacent development and infrastructure extending from the urban area, as well as development beyond the settlement edge, semi-rural land uses, and the consequent erosion of field patterns, landscape features and loss of strong rural perceptual qualities, all combine to lower landscape sensitivity to further development, for example around Wombourne (e.g. SL8, SL12, SL13, SL21) or along the northern settlement edge of Wolverhampton (e.g. SL41, SL48). However the sensitivity of these landscapes are sometimes increased due to their role in providing a perceived gap and preventing coalescence between the wider conurbation and individual villages such as Wombourne (e.g. SL20), Perton (e.g. SL29, SL33), Codsall (e.g. SL34) or between different settlements within the conurbation such as Penn (Wolverhampton) and Sedgley (Dudley) (e.g. SL17).
- 4.3 Many areas, particularly along the northern settlement edge of Wolverhampton are also located in close proximity to major transport corridors, particularly those along the M54 between its junctions with the A449, A460 and the M6 (e.g. SL56, SL57, SL59, SL60, SL61, SL62) or to the south of Cannock along the M6/M6 toll (SL66, SL67, SL68, SL69) and are often of the lowest sensitivity. These areas are often degraded both physically and perceptually, with little public access and limited natural features or are influenced by their proximity to large scale modern development typically found near major road junctions (e.g. SL41, SL49, SL50, SL51). Other areas of low sensitivity include those subject to on-going mineral extraction (e.g. SL67, SL68).
- 4.4 However, this pattern is not universal and areas along the urban conurbation can often make a significant contribution to the identity of the adjacent settlement edge. Landscape features can provide significant boundary features separating urban areas from the surrounding countryside, such as the strong woodland belts or prominent sandstone ridges between Stourbridge and Kingswinford (e.g. SL6, SL7), the ridge extending from the western edge of Penn (SL27) or the wooded north eastern settlement edge of Wombourne (SL20) which increase sensitivity to development.
- 4.5 The influence of adjacent historic landscapes and areas with a strong time-depth can increase sensitivity to development such as the areas west of Dudley adjacent to Himley Hall Registered Park and Garden (SL14, SL15, SL16, SL19), the designed parkland at Wrottesley Hall (SL32, SL35), the historic parkland between Oaken and Codsall (SL36) or the many areas with intact small scale historic field patterns.
- 4.6 The landscape areas north of the M54, in the corridor between the M6 and the A449 are often of lower sensitivity due to the impact of modern infrastructure, including the motorways and busy trunk roads, the prevalence of prominent power lines, industrial estates and on-going mineral extraction. This is particularly apparent north and south of the busy A5 (e.g. SL73, SL74) where the landscape contains areas of strongly contrasting character with large scale industry neighbouring small scale mixed farming and further north adjacent to J13 of the M6 near Dunston (e.g. SL91, SL94 and SL95). However sensitivity increases rapidly away from the motorway

corridor, due to the intact rural character, particularly where the landscape to the west of the motorway is separated by the north-south running railway line (SL81, SL92, SL93) or to the east on the elevated landscape at Acton Hill (SL96).

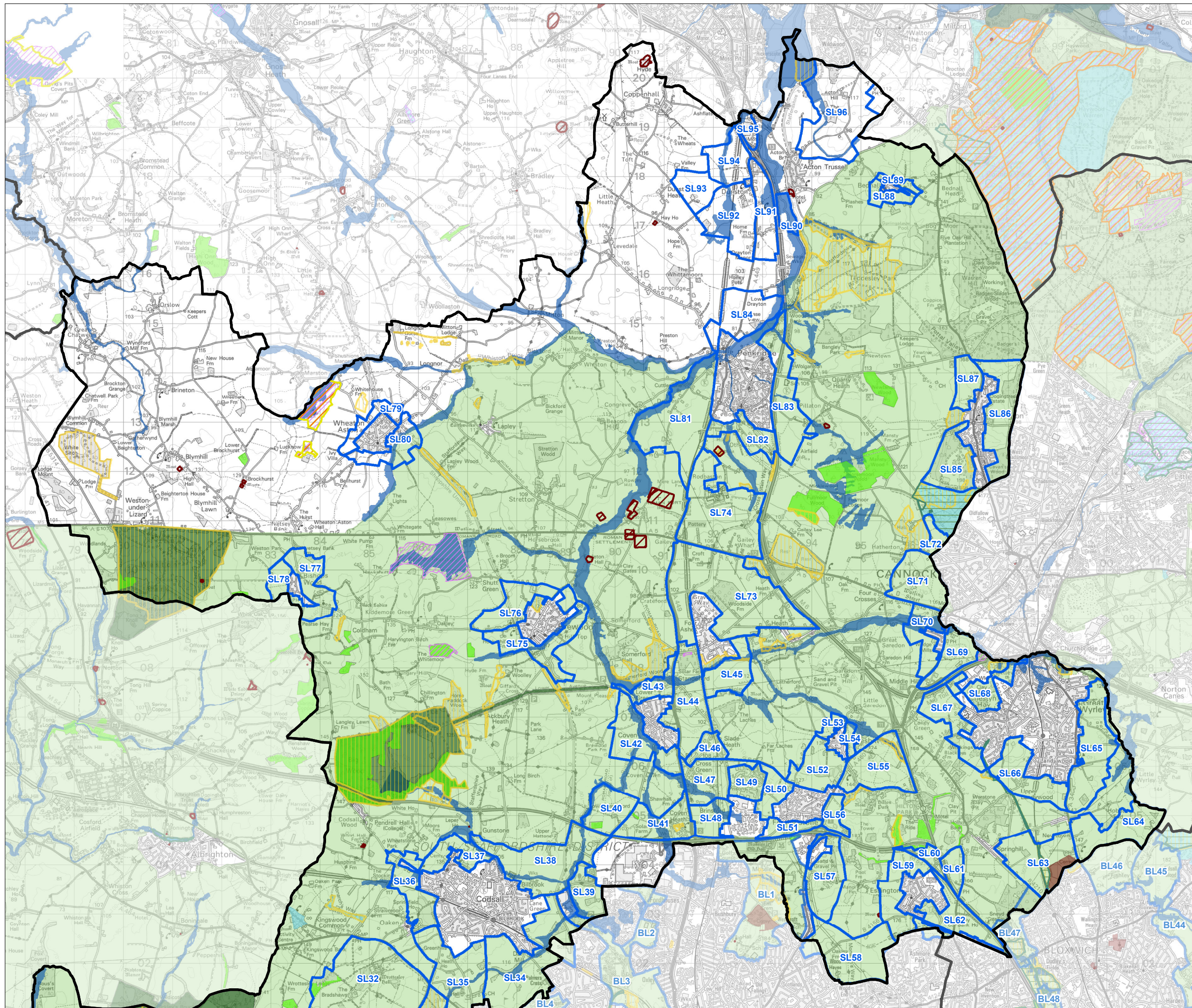
- 4.7 Landscapes adjoining the rural South Staffordshire villages generally have the highest sensitivity to development, due to their strong sense of rural character, tranquility and lack of larger scale modern development. The Conservation Areas of these historic settlements often extend into the surrounding countryside, and development in these areas would adversely affect the settlement edge. The historic cores of these villages are often positioned along river corridors, or in hilltop positions where the surrounding countryside provides a distinctive element in views that are key to the character of the settlement. Variations in sensitivity are often minor and judgements on sensitivity relate to appropriate small scale residential development.
- 4.8 Areas within the Cannock Chase AONB are of higher sensitivity, (SL72, SL85, SL86) due to their natural and recreational character and consideration of the impact of development on the special qualities of the landscape as part of a nationally designated landscape.

Table 4.1 Summary of Results

Landscape area ref	Landscape area (ha)	Landscape Sensitivity	Council / Borough
BL1	147	Moderate	City of Wolverhampton / South Staffordshire
BL1 s2	133.74	Moderate - High	City of Wolverhampton / South Staffordshire
BL3	196.81	Low - Moderate	City of Wolverhampton / South Staffordshire
BL47	66.76	Moderate	Walsall / South Staffordshire
SL1	200.59	Moderate	South Staffordshire / Dudley
SL2	74.77	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire
SL3	63.67	High	South Staffordshire
SL4	118.06	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire
SL5	65.37	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire
SL6	380.77	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire
SL7	228.41	High	South Staffordshire / Dudley
SL8	108.06	Low - Moderate	South Staffordshire / Dudley
SL8 s2	53.19	Moderate	South Staffordshire / Dudley
SL9	75.41	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire
SL10	15.16	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL11	92.03	Low - Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL12	298.96	Low - Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL13	139.8	Low - Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL13 s2	61.42	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL14	60.42	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL15	82.18	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire / Dudley
SL16	145.35	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire
SL17	138.73	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire
SL18	112.91	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire / City of Wolverhampton
SL19	278.43	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire
SL20	131.76	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire
SL21	115.88	Low - Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL21 s2	75.92	Moderate	South Staffordshire

Landscape area ref	Landscape area (ha)	Landscape Sensitivity	Council / Borough
SL22	49.74	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire
SL23	24.23	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire
SL24	16.94	High	South Staffordshire
SL25	49.46	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire
SL26	37.48	High	South Staffordshire
SL27	25.8	Low - Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL27 s2	40.14	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL28	171.75	Moderate	South Staffordshire / City of Wolverhampton
SL29	187.1	Moderate	South Staffordshire / City of Wolverhampton
SL29 s2	81.19	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire / City of Wolverhampton
SL30	74.54	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL31	55.65	High	South Staffordshire
SL32	374.86	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire
SL33	59.4	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL34	249.92	Moderate	South Staffordshire / City of Wolverhampton
SL35	174.64	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire
SL36	48.59	High	South Staffordshire
SL36 s2	37.46	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire
SL37	58.19	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire
SL38	187.36	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL39	41.03	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL39 s2	15.19	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire
SL40	73.2	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL41	92.59	Low - Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL42	26.23	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL42 s2	79.64	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire
SL43	43.12	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL44	139.18	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL45	72.1	Low - Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL46	31.96	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL47	60.06	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL47 s2	25.39	Low - Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL48	50.43	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL49	46.31	Low	South Staffordshire
SL50	44.85	Low - Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL51	30.66	Low - Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL52	81.75	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL53	15.97	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire
SL54	14.59	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL55	121.13	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL56	28.06	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL57	53.24	Low - Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL57 s2	42.57	Low	South Staffordshire

Landscape area ref	Landscape area (ha)	Landscape Sensitivity	Council / Borough
SL58	157.01	Low - Moderate	South Staffordshire / City of Wolverhampton
SL59	89.19	Low - Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL60	21.36	Low	South Staffordshire
SL61	31.03	Low	South Staffordshire
SL62	100.59	Low - Moderate	South Staffordshire / City of Wolverhampton
SL63	134.24	Low - Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL64	101.11	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL64 s2	12.98	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire
SL65	157.33	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL66	103.51	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL67	87.58	Low - Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL68	57.51	Low	South Staffordshire
SL69	64.48	Low - Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL70	67.18	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL71	99.83	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL72	22.68	High	South Staffordshire
SL73	344.13	Low - Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL74	231.91	Low - Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL75	96.21	High	South Staffordshire
SL76	94.13	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire
SL77	83.75	High	South Staffordshire
SL78	28.37	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire
SL79	39.09	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire
SL80	49.65	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire
SL80 s2	16.06	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL81	219.39	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire
SL82	59.13	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL83	138.14	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL84	82.89	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire
SL84 s2	23.08	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL85	91.35	High	South Staffordshire
SL86	132.22	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire
SL87	48.17	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL88	28.77	High	South Staffordshire
SL89	12.92	High	South Staffordshire
SL90	22.12	Moderate - High	South Staffordshire
SL91	77.97	Low - Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL92	125.09	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL93	54.72	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL94	47.84	Low - Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL94 s2	23.88	Moderate	South Staffordshire
SL95	20.83	Low	South Staffordshire
SL96	225.14	High	South Staffordshire



South Staffordshire Landscape Sensitivity

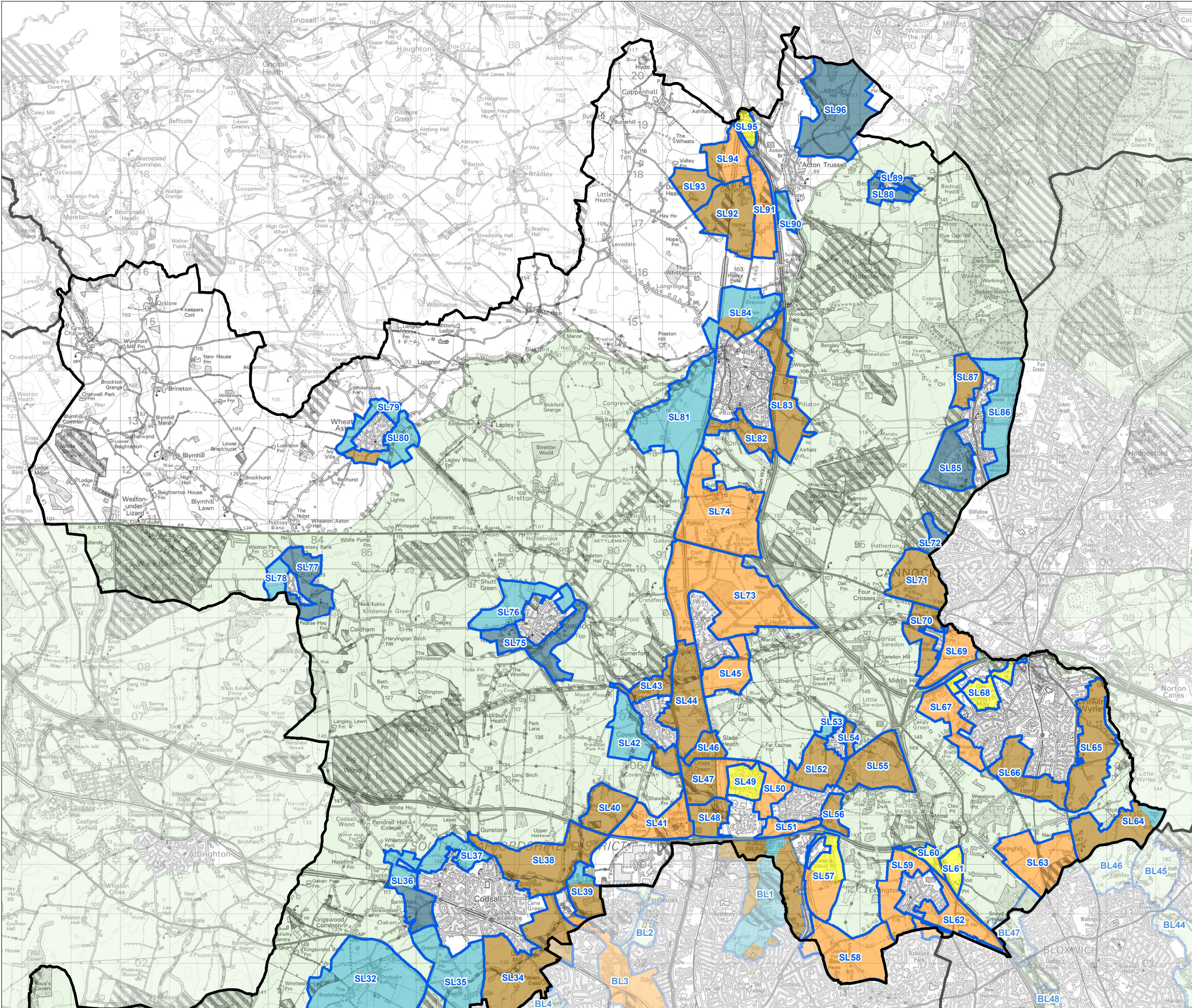
**Figure 4.1: Absolute Constraints -
South Staffordshire North**

- South Staffordshire (North)
- Other Local Authority
- Green Belt
- Landscape area
- Landscape area in Black Country
- Cultural Heritage**
 - Registered Parks and Gardens
 - Scheduled Monument
- Natural Heritage**
 - Ancient Woodland
 - Local Nature Reserve
 - SINC / SBI
 - National Nature Reserve
 - Site of Special Scientific Interest
 - Special Area of Conservation
- Other**
 - Burial Ground
 - Common Land
 - Flood Zone 3

Please note: Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) are located only within the Black Country and Sites of Biological Importance (SBI) are located only within South Staffordshire. They are the equivalent of one another.

0 2 km





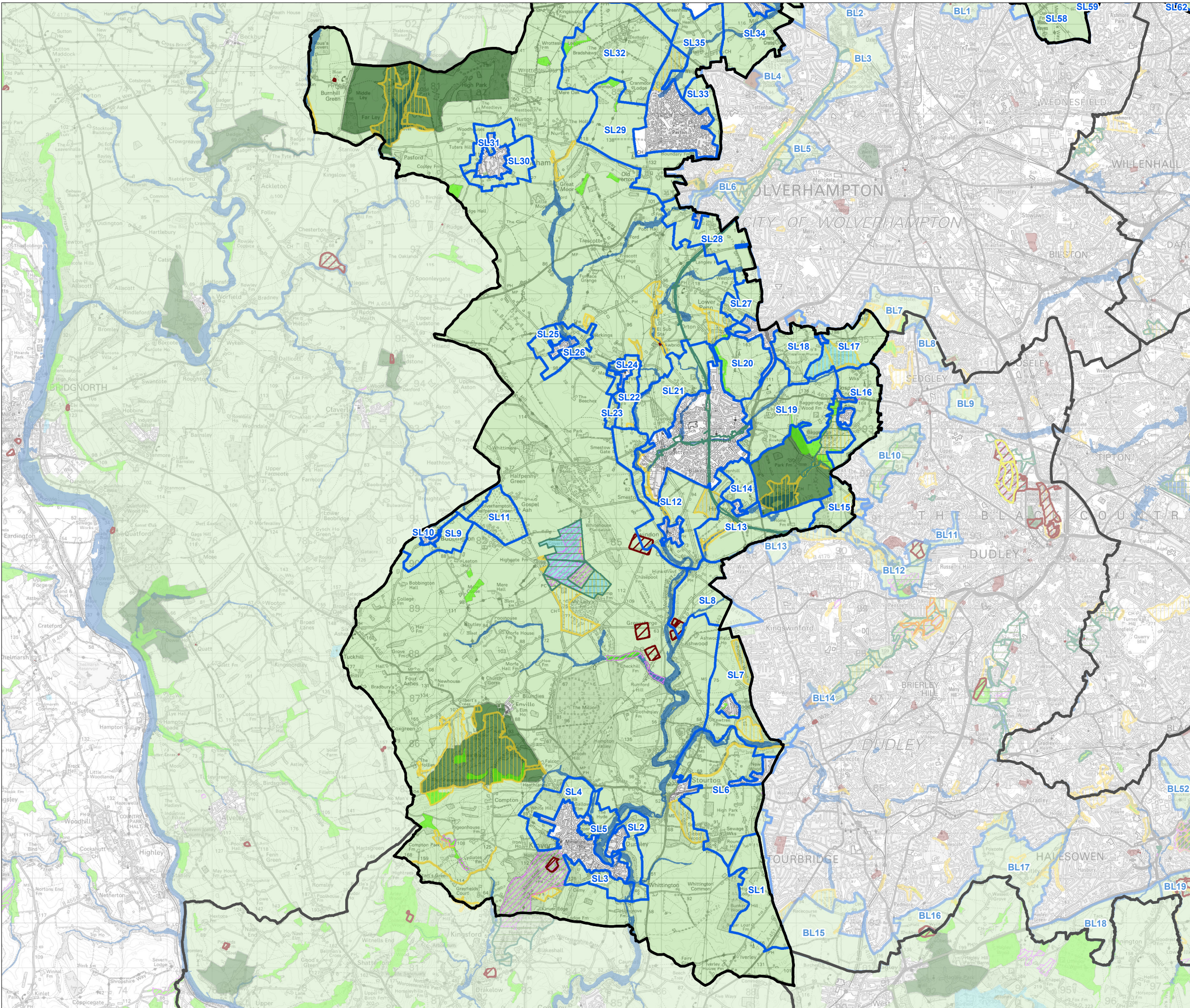
South Staffordshire Landscape Sensitivity

**Figure 4.2: Landscape Sensitivity
Assessment - South Staffordshire
North**

- South Staffordshire (North)
 - Other Local Authority
 - Green Belt
 - Landscape area
 - Landscape area in Black Country
 - Absolute Constraint
- Sensitivity rating**
- High
 - Moderate - High
 - Moderate
 - Low - Moderate
 - Low

0 2 km





South Staffordshire Landscape Sensitivity

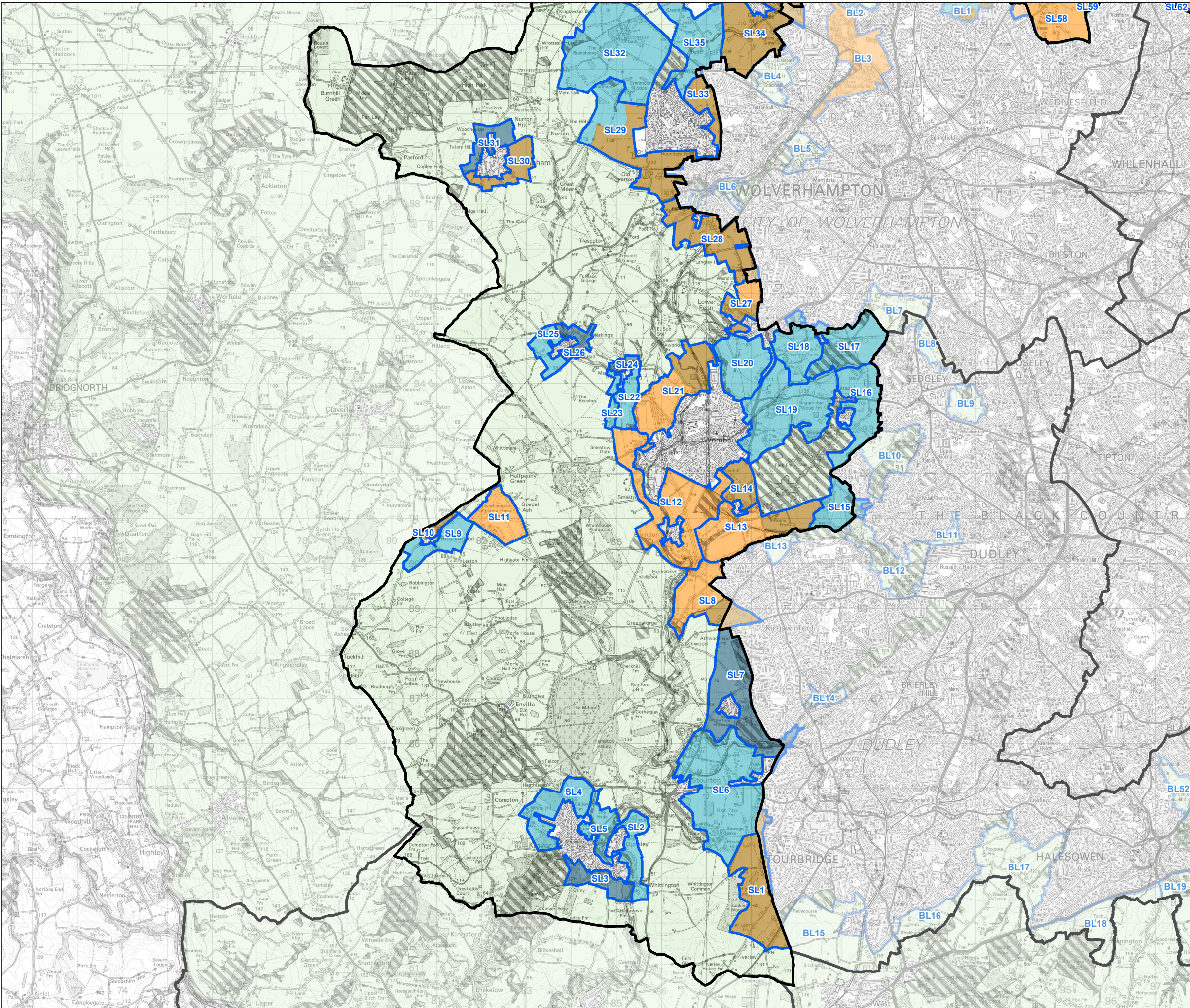
**Figure 4.3: Absolute Constraints -
South Staffordshire South**

- South Staffordshire (South)
- Other Local Authority
- Green Belt
- Landscape area
- Landscape area in Black Country
- Cultural Heritage**
 - Registered Parks and Gardens
 - Scheduled Monument
- Natural Heritage**
 - Ancient Woodland
 - Local Nature Reserve
 - SINC / SBI
 - National Nature Reserve
 - Site of Special Scientific Interest
 - Special Area of Conservation
- Other**
 - Burial Ground
 - Common Land
 - Flood Zone 3

Please note: Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) are located only within the Black Country and Sites of Biological Importance (SBI) are located only within South Staffordshire. They are the equivalent of one another.

0 2.5 km





South Staffordshire Landscape Sensitivity

**Figure 4.4: Landscape Sensitivity
Assessment - South Staffordshire
South**

- South Staffordshire (South)
 - Other Local Authority
 - Green Belt
 - Landscape area
 - Landscape area in Black Country
 - Absolute Constraint
- Sensitivity rating**
- High
 - Moderate - High
 - Moderate
 - Low - Moderate
 - Low

Appendix 1: Landscape Sensitivity Assessments



Appendix 2: South Staffordshire Settlement Hierarchy



South Staffordshire		
Main Service Villages	Billbrook Brewood Codsall Cheslyn Hay Great Wyrley	Kinver Penkridge Perton Wombourne
Local Service Villages	Coven Essington Featherstone Huntington	Pattingham Swindon Wheaton Aston
Small Service Villages	Bednall Bishops Wood Bobbington	Dunston Shareshill Trysull
Other Villages and Hamlets	Acton Trussell Blymhill Brineton Burnhill Green Calf Heath Codsall Wood Coppenhall Coven Heath Enville Gospel End Great Chatwell Halfpenny Green Hatherton Hilton	Himley Kingswood Lapley Lower Penn Newtown Oaken Saredon Seisdon Springhill Stourton Stretton Wedge Mills Weston-under-Lizard

Appendix 3: Glossary of Abbreviations



Term	Definition
AOD	Above Ordnance Datum (sea level)
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – a statutory national landscape designation
GIS	Geographic Information System
Ha	Hectares
HER	Historic Environment Record
HLC	Historic Landscape Characterisation
Landscape Character Areas (LCAs)	Single unique areas that are the discrete geographical area of a particular landscape type.
Landscape Character Types (LCTs)	Distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogenous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different areas in different parts of the country, but share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation, historic land use and settlement pattern.
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LSA	Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
NCA	National Character Area – defined within the National Character Area Study, Natural England (2013) - NCAs divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, history, and cultural and economic activity.
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
OS	Ordnance Survey
SBI	Sites of Biological Importance (within South Staffordshire, equivalent to SINC in the Black Country)
Scheduled Monument (SM)	Nationally important archaeological sites or historic buildings, given protection against unauthorised change.
SINC	Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (within Black Country, equivalent to SBI in South Staffordshire)
pSINC	Potential Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (within Black Country) – recommended for inclusion as SINC but not yet endorsed by the committee.
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest

Appendix 4: Response to comments from Duty to Cooperate 'Consultees



Stakeholder	Comments	LUC Response
Cannock Chase District Council	Landscape Sensitivity Assessment should have regard to existing landscape assessments for the AONB and should also take into consideration neighbouring authority assessments when assessing sites on boundaries to ensure consistency/clear narrative.	The LSA takes account of landscape character assessments for neighbouring areas where available, and the AONB Management Plan and the defined 'special qualities' of the AONB (see chapter 2 Landscape Context and Guidance of each LSA report).
Shropshire Council	Support clear separation of landscape sensitivity considerations from Green Belt purposes assessment.	Noted.
	A different approach is being used for the LSA than that used in Shropshire, primarily around the identification of parcels, and use of a 7 point scale. The council wishes to ensure that the Shropshire and South Staffordshire border areas are treated in a similar manner. However, it is considered that there are no inherent conflicts between the respective approaches.	<p>The area covered by the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (LSA) corresponds with the area assessed in relation to harm at Stage 2 of the Green Belt Study as well as additional areas in South Staffordshire outside the Green Belt subject to call for sites. However, the LSA parcels do not correspond with the GB study parcels, and are defined in relation to areas of similar landscape character.</p> <p>The LSA considers the impact of development in relation to both housing and employment where call for sites propose employment development. A 5 point sensitivity scale has been used for the LSA.</p>
Historic England	Historic England has no concerns in relation to the proposed methodology and welcomes the resources referred to in Para. 5.14 in respect of historic landscape characterisation and the landscape sensitivity assessment process, Stage 1, DBA work proposed.	Noted.